

London Erratics v Bank of England

A sunny day. The Bank won the toss and elected to bat. Late substitutions had weakened the Erratics bowling but strengthened the batting, while the Bank turned up with not one but three colts, usually a danger sign. The Erratics being oversubscribed, their match manager Peter Andrews reverted to his day job and opened for the Bank.

Looking at the very short boundaries and baked outfield, the consensus was that 220 was a minimum requirement batting first. However, the Bank pitch tends to keep low and was slower than it looked. Progress was torpid, with Brian Berrigan accurate as ever and Michael Stephenson combining the odd danger ball with some varieties for which the batsmen could not prepare. One of these, a full toss above head high, Dilscooped over fine leg without the need to kneel down, produced Peter's first six for 15 years and first ever at Roehampton – a rare birthday present. Given the proximity of the boundary ropes it was surprising that this was the only six of the match. Peter kept things chugging along mainly with a medley of shots behind square leg, while his partners struggled to get the ball off the square.

Michael was replaced by Matthew Eltringham, who found a decent length and some inswing. The pressure gradually induced the Bank upper order to sacrifice themselves, Peter being well held from an off-side skier by Matthew Penfold in spite of a collision with Bill Bush. [Our correspondent modestly doesn't allude in his narrative to the half century he had scored – Ed.] The young No. 6 played some classy shots before John Lee held a tumbling catch at mid-on.

Enter Richard Langley at No. 7, recently a key figure in the Erratics victory at Great Milton, to share a little partnership with the Bank's veteran off-spinner. During this, Michael attempted to stop a fierce off-drive: the manner of his collapse suggested that all was not well, and this was confirmed by the appearance of his hands – one finger dislocated and two small fractures. There was some irritation on the Erratics side that the batsmen had run with Michael in obvious pain (the second time in the innings that the game had not been stopped for an injury); but the Bank immediately provided their most mobile colt as a sub rather than one of the veterans.

Tony Poulter's off-spin induced a cameo from the third Bank junior (4, 4, out), and Matthew P helped tidy up the innings – with occasional Erratic (and Bank captain for the day) Richard Down stranded.

Tea included individual cartons of clotted cream to go with scones and jam, but the English present were unable to explain to the Australian Matthew P how this is produced.

James Rivington and Matthew Neal started even more slowly than the Bank had, against a short and slightly chubby colt who bowled surprisingly quick left armers and the more seasoned off-spinner. The batsmen appreciated in theory that, against the elderly Bank fielding, some quick singles were possible and necessary, but it was not always possible to achieve consensus in practice on which shots were worth a scamper. After a couple of near misses, James was sold down the river by a very sharp call from Matthew and a direct hit from Richard D. Matthew hit a couple of good blows and then succumbed.

Then came the moment that set the tone for the rest of the match. Just as a plane flew low overhead on its approach to Heathrow, Nasir Khawaja flashed at the off-spinner, the fielders heard a woody-sounding sound, the colt keeper held on to the ball, there was a joyous appeal (the Bank knew Nasir's quality as a batsman from previous performances), and ... umpire Chris Dunabin pointed to the plane to indicate that he couldn't hear anything. Central bankers don't go in for demonstrations, of course, but from then on the fielders grumbled rather like the black population of Maycomb after Tom's verdict in *Mockingbird*. The youngsters were conspicuously rather better behaved than their elders (debatable decisions being normal in junior cricket).

James came in to umpire himself, and soon gave Brian lbw. Unfortunately for the atmosphere, Brian felt that he had hit the ball, and it was clear that there had been (another?) nick, so James recalled him. The Bank fielders agreed that they would sportingly have done so had it not been for the earlier incident. Soon afterwards Brian chipped a full toss to mid-on.

With 5 an over needed off the final 20 overs, Bill and Nasir then got on top for the first time, disrupting the field with their contrasting styles. Richards D and L were introduced, and then knocked out of the attack. Several more tight singles were essayed, mostly on Nasir's call. James turned down a strong appeal against Bill when, although well past the crease, some felt he had not grounded his bat before a direct hit scattered the stumps. Next ball he was run out by miles at the other end by a gentle lob from Peter. Matthew E relieved the tension with a couple of big shots but was undone on the second run by a rocket throw from the colt fast bowler. It was left to Nasir to pilot the ship home, which he duly did with a couple of overs to go.

Fortunately a combination of Peter's birthday/6 and Matthew N's election drinks, plus some intellectual conversation, improved the mood on a balmy sunny evening on the Bank's piazza.

PA

[*Editor's addendum.* Some curious decisions by the Bank (electing to bat, and the batting order itself) aided the Erratics, but it was still a remarkably polished performance to bowl out the home side for such a gettable target. For this, the Erratics deserved this win. And although Nasir posted the top score, his survival at the crease gave him the opportunity to run out other potential match winners in a strong line-up.]

BANK OF ENGLAND — batting

1	c Penfold	b Eltringham	61
2		b Berrigan	5
3	c Eltringham	b Berrigan	6
4		b Berrigan	2
5	lbw	b Eltringham	8
6	c Lee	b Poulter	17
7	c Neal	b Penfold	12
8	c Eltringham	b Poulter	11
9		b Poulter	8
10	c & b	b Penfold	2
11	not out		4

152 all out

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Stephenson	8	1	24	0
Berrigan	13	1	39	3
Eltringham	9	2	32	2
Poulter	6.2	1	30	3
Penfold	4	1	18	2

Fall of wickets: 1–28, 2–57, 3–83, 4–85, 5–93, 6–117, 7–133, 8–141, 9–148, 10–152

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

			4s	6s
*	Rivington	run out	8	1
	Neal	bowled	23	4
†	Khawaja N	NOT OUT	68	11
	Lee	bowled	5	1
	Berrigan	caught	12	2
	Bush	run out	17	3
	Eltringham	run out	10	2
	Penfold	NOT OUT	0	
	Dunabin			
	Poulter			
	Stephenson			

153 for 6

Fall of wickets: 1(Rivington)–19, 2(Neal)–37, 3(Lee)–59, 4(Berrigan)–76, 5(Bush)–118, 6(Eltringham)–134

ERRATICS WON BY 4 WICKETS